

HB 635 -- CORRECTIONAL TREATMENT PROGRAMS

SPONSOR: Fitzwater

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass - Federal Mandate" by the Special Standing Committee on Corrections by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill changes the age requirement for first time offenders to enter correctional treatment programs from less than 17 years of age to less than 18 years of age. The bill also repeals the provisions requiring prosecuting attorneys to maintain records regarding the sentencing of offenders under 17 years of age and the provisions requiring the Department of Corrections to submit an evaluation report to the Governor and General Assembly concerning offenders under 17 years of age.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the United States Department of Justice has established a new definition for youthful offenders placing all under the age of 18 under that category. Currently, the department has two levels of classification for youthful offenders, those under 18 and those under 17. These offenders must be housed separately. The bill allows the department to house these offenders in the same facility but separated from the older adult populations.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Fitzwater; and Department of Corrections.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.